

Trip Report, LCU-Liktanur - Medical Surveys at Wotje, Utirik, Rongelap  
and Bikini - March 21- April 4, 1976

Upon completion of the medical surveys at Majuro and Ebeye the Liktañur departed Kwajalein Atoll for Wotje at 1800 on March 21st with 12 members of the medical team, a 3 Japanese TV group and a representative of the Congress of Micronesia. Personnel are listed in the attached summary report of medical findings. On board were the bunk trailer, whole body counter trailer (used for bunk space), one conex with medical boxes, jeep and Boston Whaler.

The voyage to Wotje was rough. We arrived at the dock in Wotje about 6 hours late (1430 on March 24th) due to defective radar equipment causing the vessel to get off course to the north of Wotje atoll during the night. An attempt at using a northern passage was unsuccessful resulting in temporary grounding (cause of some apprehension). Apparently the radar can only see 10 miles which seems inadequate. The thyroid survey (including sick calls) at Wotje went well with excellent cooperation by the people. The whaler was used to examine about 50 people on Ormed Island about 5 miles away. We took a "walkie talkie" along to maintain ship contact. A pleasant farewell party with gifts and native foods was given by the ladies of Wotje on the dock by the ship. We departed from Wotje at 1700.

The voyage to Utirik was smoother than to Wotje and since we arrived the following night we layed off outside the atoll entering the pass at sunrise and arriving at Utirik Island at 0830. The LCU anchored off shore awaiting high tide at which time beaching resulted in a dry ramp (unusual at Utirik). A village meeting was held and thyroid examinations of people on the Island and sick calls went well. A farewell party and feast was held just before departure. There was notable cordiality with speeches, flower leis and the entire village gathered on the beach to wave goodbye

as the Liktañur pulled up ramp and steamed away. We departed at 1500 (March 20th).

The voyage to Rongelap was down wind and relatively smooth with only the annoying exhaust fumes to mar the trip. We arrived at Rongelap at 1730 on March 29th and anchored in the lagoon until early the next morning when a good beaching was achieved. The villagers were on the beach with flower leis to greet us and a big sign "Welcome to Rongelap" on the beach. The village meeting, examination schedule, sick calls and thyroid surveys went smoothly with excellent cooperation from the people. A party with viewing of colored slides, movies, games, singing and refreshments was enjoyed by all. Due to an emergency medical case a "Goose" from Majuro had to be flown in to Rongelap to take the patient to the Kwajalein Hospital. We departed from Rongelap about 1600 on April 3rd with the 3 thyroid cancer cases to be taken to Tripler Hospital in Honolulu. The bulldozer from Rongelap was taken on board for work over at Kwajalein. Arrived off Enyu, Sunday, April 4th and Drs. Robbins, Knudsen, Kotrady, Iaman and I went to Bikini by whale boat. The boat sputtered and stalled during the trip. At Bikini we were warmly greeted and held a meeting with the people in one of the empty houses (the meeting is discussed in the survey summary). The boat was worked on by a mechanic before leaving for Enyu and the return trip was uneventful. In the meantime, the DC-4 from Kwajalein had arrived on Enyu with the radiological survey group headed by Mr. Greenhouse, several Bikinians and Ted Murowski. The Rongelap bulldozer was used to transfer the medical boxes to the plane and remove the equipment of the radiological survey group to the LCU. We departed from Enyu about 1330 for Kwajalein. Drs. Knudsen, Kotrady and Mr. Heotis remained with the radiological survey group at Bikini.

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The Japanese TV group headed by Dr. Hayakawa recorded the activities of the medical team and island people on sound film at Wotje, Utirik and Rongelap. They did not go ashore at Bikini (only Enyu) and were not allowed to take movies at Kwajalein. They were a pleasant group and tried not to interfere with the activities of the medical team any more than necessary. A 50 minute TV program of the survey will be shown in Japan, May 20th, 8-9 P.M., Channel 1 by NHK (Japanese Broadcasting Co.).

The Liktañur operated well except for the radar trouble referred to above. It is a long, slow trip to these islands and a faster ship would be nice. However, the improvement over past travel is great. The meals were good, wholesome and more than adequate. In the future we will give advance notice of anticipated meals for stevedores and helpers for purposes of advance planning and accounting. Inevitably at these outer islands other people appeared for meals. Perhaps the team leader should approve guests for meals. A few other points about the LCU. Several wooden benches with backs, about the size that would seat 3 people, would be nice. They should be heavy enough so as not to slide around in rough seas. A new jeep is badly needed for transporting people in the outer islands (since the step van will no longer be available at Kwajalein, a vehicle such as a pick up truck with covered box for transporting people at Ebeye during the surveys is desirable). In the bunk trailer receptacles for toilet articles around the work basin and a few more towel racks would be helpful; also racks beside the beds for limited clothing or other articles (see attached drawing for another suggestion). Another suggestion is an exhaust fan in the toilet. A desk, available for writing purposes, would be nice but I don't know where it could be put. The desk in the Captain's cabin is not

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suitable since the area is a thoroughfare to the ward room. It would be desirable to have a trash compactor, it would reduce the volume of trash until it could be disposed of at sea. A ramp extension that would offer a means to getting ashore in situations such as at Utirik where a dry ramp is usually difficult to achieve would be helpful. Perhaps a floating styro-foam bridge would be the answer.

The medical findings and other aspects of the survey are summarized in an attached report.

We are most grateful for the splendid assistance furnished by the personnel of ERDA and Global Associates in carrying out the survey.

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